

Lloyd George Dissected

A Review by H. L. PANGBORN.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE. By E. T. Raymond. George H. Doran Company.

NO one of the great figures thrown into prominence by the war has so steadily kept a place in the public eye throughout the whole world as David Lloyd George, but although there has been no lack of current biography, and certainly no lack of either condemnatory criticism or praise, it is probably true that the average reader knows far less of him than, for example, of Clemenceau, Wilson or Foch. There has grown up a variety of legends about him as the "little Welsh attorney," the "cottage bred" hero and champion of the people, or as the merely astute demagogue. Mr. Raymond renders a signal service in this comprehensive, searching, critical but not unsympathetic analysis of this complex personality. The figure that emerges is fully comprehensible, and his importance as, in a way, a necessary expression of the epoch and of the war, becomes more evident than before. For he is an epochal figure, and whatever may be the immediate or continuing results of the recent election, the shadow of Lloyd George and of the tendencies he embodies are not likely to be wholly cut off.

Mr. Raymond is very far from being either a hero worshipper or a destructive critic. There is an extraordinary aloofness about his attitude, a judicial, balanced attitude that one very rarely meets in any contemporary appraisal of greatness. The result is not only an adequate biography but also an acute study in political and social evolution. Moreover, Mr. Raymond is a master of English style; his manner could hardly be improved upon for the purpose of the book, although he is never able to refrain from an epigrammatic summary when opportunity offers, such as the remark that Mr. George became a "democrat who sometimes has to trust the people, but would much rather not," or that the Coalition majority in Parliament in its anxiety to make Germany pay was "almost as ignorant as the economic experts themselves concerning the possibilities of that policy." But there is never too much of the epigrammatic; it never degenerates into smartness and never distorts his calmer judgment. It merely brightens the page with a luminous lightning flash.

Although with the progress of maturity

and broadening of view Mr. George attained a "kindly and tolerant attitude" the basic fact in his personality remained, if we read Mr. Raymond's diagnosis correctly, the trait that expressed itself in the very youthful Mr. George in what might be called a "class bitterness,"—not, however, in any crudely revolutionary sense. But as Mr. Raymond with great acuteness points out, the most insurmountable barrier which separates human individuals is that which marks off "the man of financial independence from him who never can be sure of the next day's or month's or year's or ten years' subsistence. There can easily be friendship, true and warm, between members of the two classes; there can never be understanding." That profound observation reaches to the very root of the problems of government in a democracy, here as well as in the British Empire. It marks the distinction between the British government of some two hundred years prior to Lloyd George's premiership and that which he strove to install. In his case it involved a practical departure from any really parliamentary, constitutional government and developed into a form of dictatorship. And it so happened that nothing short of a dictatorship could have served to help England to

"win the war" at the critical stage" (or, more accurately, to do her part to that end), and that probably no other form of dictatorship than that of Lloyd George's could have been endured. Certainly no crudely military dictator could have done the business.

Mr. Raymond shows Lloyd George's greatest service to civilization to be his achievement in bringing about the necessary "unity of command" in France, and, secondly, in inducing the American government to acquiesce in it. He sums up:

"The abandonment of Cabinet responsibility, the latitude given to subordinates . . . was bound to result in much caprice, and there were times when Mr. George's administration was very much like that of Harun al Raschid, in that the most innocent things suddenly became crimes and 'one-eyed calendars' were abruptly elevated to positions of importance. But it had also the virtues of its defects. . . It had vision, vigour, high courage. In short, it reflected . . . the character of its chief. Both qualities and defects are traceable to the peculiarities which made Lloyd George the supreme example of the political impressionist."

Indeed, Mr. George, according to his critic, has no "political philosophy." But

his opportunism is nevertheless not to be regarded as irresponsible or essentially an evil, or even a weak thing. It sufficed at the crisis where possibly a more farseeing philosophy would have failed—in fact, had failed. The other leaders, in one way or another, were victims of their minor inhibitions. In particular the "public school tradition" statesmen, the disciples of Jewett and the Oxford systems of political and economic philosophy, were unable to deal with the situation; Mr. George was never deterred because a thing "isn't done, you know." Almost alone among statesmen of all the countries Mr. George, so his critic thinks, was able to concentrate upon the single idea of victory. And the nation realized that he was "out to win."

But these same qualities that made him great in war were a fatal weakness in the attempted peace making. Space limits forbid any detailed examination of the peace proceedings or of the years since then, but one cannot refrain from quoting Mr. Raymond's comparison of the life of the Coalition government up to the last few weeks to the case of Poe's grewsome tale of Mr. Valdemar, the man who was kept to a semblance of life through "mesmeric" influences for seven months after his real death and "when the spell was at last reversed his body liquefied into instantaneous putrefaction."

The book follows Mr. George from his infancy, throwing much illumination upon his career, as social reformer, "man of the people" and so on to his present eclipse.

An Ambassador's Extraordinary Memoirs

UNDER FOUR ADMINISTRATIONS. By Oscar S. Straus. Houghton Mifflin Company.

A SINGULAR and happy gift illuminates Ambassador Straus's autobiography. It is the gift of being able repeatedly to make his readers forget that he is a distinguished diplomat and statesman. Like Benjamin Franklin, he knows how to close up the gulf that invariably yawns between some one who has had remarkable experiences and some one who has had lesser experiences, and to draw the two together on common and companionable ground.

This is art of a very high order, and it imparts to autobiography a beguiling magic that instantly sets it apart from those autobiographies that are conceived in personal conceit and dedicated to the effort to demonstrate that the author is greater than his fellows.

If you are tired of novels, bored with

history, or fed up with biography, you will find sure relief in the engrossing pages of "Under Four Administrations." It is a narrative alive with action. Illustrious men and dramatic events move in a continuous procession through its pages. The personages of scores of nations are caught off their guard and pictured with delightful informality—Grover Cleveland at the theater, the urbane John Hay seizing upon a fortunate diplomatic phrase, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell wanting to see the inside of a Turkish household, an imbecile Sultan stumbling through a speech, President Lowell of Harvard telling a dinky story, Pershing's nervousness at the prospect of making a speech, cardinals, poets, kings and scholars all depicted to the life. The book is so rich in material that even so interesting a portion of it as Mr. Straus's impressions of Oscar Wilde was crowded out and must wait for the second edition.

Recipient of the unique honor of being appointed by three different Administrations as Ambassador to Turkey, which is

considered in diplomatic circles the most difficult post in Europe, Mr. Straus's diplomatic career under Cleveland, McKinley and Taft nevertheless comprises only a fraction of his amazingly many sided career. Harrison called him anxiously to the White House regarding Russia's persecutions of Jews; Roosevelt had him in his Cabinet; Wilson valued his cooperation in the fight for the League of Nations.

Six Presidents are thus indebted to Mr. Straus for unusual services. And yet this tireless American has found time to distinguish himself in the practice of law, in a business career, as a member for the last twenty years of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, at The Hague, as an irresistible advocate of progressive principles in national political campaigns, as chief arbitrator in the nation's most critical railway labor dispute, as founder of the Young Men's Hebrew Association, as founder of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and as the author of the best life of Roger Williams ever written, and of numerous other notable literary works.

Here is a life that has run the social and economic gamut. It ranges from a cottage in Bavaria to the Venetian Palace in Washington, and from a diet of corn bread and molasses in Georgia to the terrapin of which Roosevelt is described as having been especially fond. It ranges from the practice of oratory as a barefoot boy under the trees of the South, to the brilliant advocacy of American ideas and rights before monarchs and international statesmen.

Having read "Under Four Administrations" one can readily understand why Mr. Straus, a Jew, has never known what it was to be discriminated against because he was a Jew.

Geographically alone, this volume has a scope that is rarely to be found anywhere save in a book of travel. The narrative forges with adroit and atmospheric skill to the center of momentous events transpiring in New York, Washington, London, Paris, Rome, Constantinople, Cairo and Jerusalem. The reader is taken on memorable motor tours through Algiers and Normandy, on cruises through the Mediterranean and the Bosphorus. One sails with the autobiographer into strange ports, and is led through mysterious, exotic streets.

The trouble breeding Balkans, and Turkey, that hotbed of international dissensions, are portrayed and interpreted with a comprehending knowledge that is invaluable at this moment of renewed and menacing rumblings in the Near East.

But the main value of "Under Four Administrations" is something deeper and more profound. It consists of the revelation of how a remarkable career was fashioned from the humblest beginnings, and how greatness of character was gradually achieved. These things are unconsciously and involuntarily disclosed.

A Tree That Yields a Ton of Apples



A TREE that yields a ton of apples! This generous tree, whose fruit is of the Northern Spy variety, grows on the farm "Meadow Sweep" at Rhinebeck, N. Y., owned by John M. Gard-

ner. It gave this fall thirteen and a half barrels of sound apples, weighing over one ton.

Mr. Gardner has owned the farm but five years and does not know how old is

his apple tree. He believes that a consultation of farm statistics will show that its yield establishes a record.

The height of the tree is thirty-five feet, and the spread of the lower limbs is forty-five feet in diameter.